



Testimony Before the Public Health Committee, Insurance And Real Estate
Committee and Human Services Committee
Regarding House Bill 6582 (Raised) An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare
Partnership

March 2, 2009

Eleanor A. Brooks
Blindness Related Supports
Center at
Oak Hill

The Hartford Artisans'
Center
at Oak Hill

Individual and Family
Supports Center at
Oak Hill

The NEAT Center
at Oak Hill

Oak Hill Birth to
Three Program

Oak Hill Camp

Oak Hill Center for
Relationship & Sexuality
Education

Oak Hill Day Services

Oak Hill Foundation, Inc.

Oak Hill Professional
Development

Oak Hill Residential
Services

Oak Hill School

120 Holcomb Street
Hartford, CT 06112

Tel (860)242-2274
Fax (860)242-3103

www.ciboakhill.org

Good day Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Public Health, Insurance and Real Estate and Human Services Committees. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of House Bill 6582 An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership.

I am Stan Soby, Vice President for Community Programs, at Oak Hill, a community-based non-profit provider located here in Hartford, with over 100 programs in fifty-eight towns in Connecticut, providing services and supports to over 500 individuals every day. Oak Hill provides Birth to Three programs, educational, residential and vocational services to people with intellectual and other disabilities, housing and support services to individuals with visual impairments, individualized supports to people with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, Assistive Technology services, including to service members injured in combat, and low-cost, restored durable medical equipment to anyone with a disability who will benefit from it.

We offer health insurance to over 750 staff whose positions with us are twenty or more hours per week, with individual coverage for some 350 staff and coverage for spouses, children or families for the other 400. Our health insurance cost this current year is over \$7.9 million. This cost is just under 10% higher than last year. That is a \$900,000 increase in a year in which we have received no increase in our rates. The increase from last year to this would have been higher had we not chosen last year offer a High Deductible Health Plan with a Health Savings Account to eligible staff and to self-insure the \$1,500 ambulatory services and inpatient services deductible for the other plan.

Over the years, our employees have shared the cost of increases through higher deductibles and increases in their monthly contributions. Later this month, we will begin negotiating a wage and health benefit reopener to our collective bargaining agreement with District 1199. We know that maintaining affordable, comprehensive medical care will be a critical part of these negotiations. We do not want to be in the position of balancing cost and coverage on the backs of our employees as we face two more years of zero percent rate increases.

We are encouraged that the Healthcare Partnership could provide plans which are priced less than what we are currently paying with comparable, if not better, coverage. Based on our experience, we find the 8% cap that is built into the current contracts is a key element. Knowing that participation would be voluntary is an important feature of the Healthcare Partnership, as many of our colleague agencies may not find the plan affordable to them.

We thank Speaker Donovan for this initiative that can help providers like Oak Hill contain costs and still offer benefits that attract and retain good employees. We look forward to working with the Speaker and the Legislature as this bill moves forward.